Gurley, P.D.

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SERMON

PREACHED FOR THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NEW YORK, MAY 4, 1856,

BY THE

REV. PHINEAS D. GURLEY, D.D.

MINISTER OF THE F ST. CHURCH, WASHINGTON CITY.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED AT THE MISSION HOUSE,
No. 23 CENTRE STREET.

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"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."—Mark xvi. 15.

So spake the Son of God. These are among the last words He addressed to His apostles before He was parted from them, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. The circumstances were memorable. From the deepest scenes of his humiliation he had just emerged in triumph. He had endured the cross, despising the shame,—and his *sufferings* were finished. The work of atonement was complete. He had been delivered for the offences of many, and raised again for their justification; that resurrection had fully vindicated his character and claims as the true Messiah, the promised Saviour of the world; and now as he is about to return to his Father and his throne, he says to the eleven, and through them to all his people in every age, even unto the end of the world, "It is for you now to tell to dying sinners everywhere the story of my love—what I have done and suffered for their salvation. Spread it, spread it to earth's remotest bounds. This is my last behest. With these words I leave you, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.'"

Here lies the *sanction* and here dates the *commencement* of the missionary enterprise. It is a risen and ascending Saviour's last legacy to his people. This great and precious interest, this momentous part of the scheme of human redemption, he has confided to them that they may act as the cherishers of its life, the agents of its progress and its achievements. Here, too, we see the vast extent of the missionary enterprise, the dimensions of that territory upon which it is to operate, and upon every habitable part of which it is ultimately to triumph. "The field is the world"—"all the world." The commission is far-reaching, like the love of Him who gave it; and it is put into the hands of those in whose hearts that same love has been shed abroad by the Holy Spirit. It is, therefore, expected of them that their feelings will harmonize with the *spirit* of the commission—that their benevolent sympathies will be co-extensive with the ruins of the fall—that they will yearn over the condition of man, guilty, benighted, perishing man, of every color and every clime, and be very anxious to tell him the glad tidings of a Saviour.

But if the field is very large, it is also very *dark*. "Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people." Indeed, the scene presented to the eye of Christian benevolence in the unevangelized portions of our world is gloomy, painful, and revolting, beyond description. The most absurd systems of idolatry everywhere prevail. Religious homage is paid to dumb idols of wood and stone, to the luminaries of heaven, to the spirits of departed men, to malignant demons, and even to brutes and crawling reptiles. The most cruel, foul, and debasing religious rites are everywhere adhered to and practeied. The very images and sculpture of idol temples are in the main but spectacles of impurity. The heathen have no correct views of a future state. Though unable to erase or resist the impression of a life to come, yet, in the absence of revelation, they have given to a corrupt and disordered fancy the privilege of drawing her own picture of that life, and, as we should expect, the picture, like its source, is low and sensual. Degrading views of the Deity and of Divine worship, mingled with grossly erroneous apprehensions of life beyond the grave, must, of course, result in the most loathsome and extensive wickedness. And accordingly the united voice of all who have gone from Gospel lands to the heathen testifies, that none but eye-witnesses can have any adequate idea of the shocking scenes of depravity which are everywhere exhibited. That awful description of abominations contained in the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, is an accurate picture of heathenism as it appears at the present day. Vice now, as in the days of the Apostles, bursts over all control, levels all barriers, and rolls its waves of corruption, broad and deep, on every side. The whole idol system, all over the earth, is replete with enormities untold and unimagined, and carries its deluded victims down, down to such shameless pollution that the details would be too revolting to be endured.

Such is the world to be evangelized—so dark and degraded; such is the field to be explored, occupied, and made vocal, first with the story and then with the praises of Jesus; such is the territory to be illuminated, and disenthralled, and won to Christ by the missionary enterprise. So great and so blessed is the work to be done. These systems of idolatry, hoary and strong, which have stood for centuries, supported by the pride, the prejudices, the evil passions, and the superstitious fears of men; these systems to which whole nations have become wedded by long and inveterate habit; which are associated with all that is precious in the memory of their ancestors, and interwoven, in many instances, with the institutions and entire policy of their various forms of government—these systems with all their appendages in whatever continent or island they may be found, the missionary enterprise proposes to sap, weaken, and overthrow—and that too without physical violence or the shedding of blood. By the use of the simplest moral means it proposes to remedy all those evils—the fruit of ignorance and depravity, which abound in heathen lands; by the simple preaching of the Gospel it proposes to make light spring up in the place of darkness, order in the place of confusion, mercy in the place of cruelty, holiness in the place of sin, and the spiritual worship of the true and only living God in the place of blinding superstitions and soul-ruining idolatries. The object which the missionary enterprise aims to accomplish, and which the Son of God designed that it should accomplish when he uttered the words, or rather issued the mandate of our text, will not be fully realized till the Gospel has been preached, and preached successfully in every land. Till the Indians in our western wilds bury the tomahawk and bow to the sceptre of the Prince of Peace; till the slaves of superstition in South America shall be emancipated; till Africa shall be redeemed, and even Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God; till the moral aspect of Asia shall be changed, her moral darkness dissipated, and

her countless millions shall gather and worship around the cross; till all the inhabited islands of the sea know of our Immanuel and declare his praise; till the spell of Mohammedan imposture is broken, the fetters of papal superstition are everywhere thrown off, the diversified forms of false religion melt and disappear before "the truth as it is in Jesus," the Jews are brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles, and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High. No: the design of the missionary enterprise will not be completed till

> "One song employs all nations, and all cry,
> 'Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us;'
> The dwellers in the vales, and on the rocks,
> Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
> From distant mountains catch the flying joy;
> Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
> Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round."

If such, my brethren, is the vastness of the missionary enterprise; if the territory it proposes to occupy and redeem is so dark and so extensive, and the difficulties it proposes to overcome are so numerous and formidable, then it is natural and proper that we should inquire, where are found our encouragements for engaging in it? What is the basis upon which we rest our hope of success? True, here is the commission explicit and unequivocal, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." This makes duty plain, so plain that we cannot mistake it, and may not refuse or even hesitate to discharge it without the greatest guilt; but still it may be profitable for us to inquire, Have we any incentives to obedience beyond the naked command itself? Is there anything in the past history of the missionary enterprise, or any inspired record touching its coming destiny, which is suited to stimulate the courage and the efforts of its friends? Any providential seals or scriptural teachings and predictions respecting it which point to a great and a glorious issue?

1. Are there any Providential seals upon this enterprise, clear and encouraging? In answering this inquiry, I remark: The first great chapter in its history extends from the day of Pentecost over the first three centuries of the Christian era, and is a chapter luminous with the approving signet of Divinity. The apostles, to whom the commission of our text was primarily given, were eleven feeble men from low stations in life, without learning, without wealth, without honor, limited in influence and unknown to fame. Yet to them was committed the work of diffusing through the world a spiritual and a holy religion—a religion directly opposed to the inbred corruptions of human nature, and utterly at war with idolatrous systems of belief and of worship which had stood for ages, sustained by the craft of a designing priesthood, and the influence of a benumbing superstition whose chains were like adamant, and its dominion universal. Looking simply at the greatness of the result to be accomplished, and contrasting it with the feebleness of the instrumentality to be employed, we should at once pronounce the enterprise visionary and delusive—the wildest dream that ever employed the thoughts or roused the energies of man. Still the apostles knew that the commission they had received was a reality, and not a delusion. Its authority was high, its terms were clear—they had not mistaken either its source or its import; and not many days after the effusion of the Spirit at Jerusalem, they entered boldly and earnestly upon its execution. In the name and strength of "the Man of Calvary" they went forth testifying, to both Jews and Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. They travelled through Asia

Minor, crossed over into Greece, and penetrated as far as Italy, preaching everywhere a crucified Saviour as the only hope of the world. Nor did they promulgate the unpopular doctrines of the Gospel merely among the lower orders of the people, they taught openly in the synagogues, they went to the most populous and refined cities, the centres of learning, influence, and idolatry; they assailed wickedness in high places, and denounced superstition in its strongest holds. The very points where Pagan idolatry could rally its strongest forces and oppose Christianity to the best advantage, were chosen by the apostles as their most favorite field of labor. "There, while philosophers sat around them and caviled, and mobs gathered to do them violence, and interested craftsmen sung the praises of Diana," they spake of Jesus, preached the Gospel, told the simple story of the cross. And what was their success? Brethren, you have read the record, and you know the answer. Wherever they went the God of Missions went with them. Wherever they preached the Word took effect. "Amid the profligacy and licentiousness of Corinth a flourishing church was planted. Rome, too, saw the Gospel triumph within her walls, and erect its standard at the gates of her Imperial palace, and gather its trophies from the very household of Cæsar." But not to enumerate particular victories. Suffice it to say, but a little more than a century had elapsed from the birth of Christ, when his religion had diffused itself throughout the greater part of the Roman Empire, and gained such an ascendency over idolatry that Pliny the Younger, in writing to Trajan, speaks of the heathen temples as having been almost desolate, their sacred solemnities intermitted, and their sacrificial victims as finding only here and there a purchaser. And for more than two centuries from this time, Christianity continued to spread its light and its victories, till, in the language of Tertullian and Origen, its doctrines "filled the cities, islands, towns, boroughs, the camp, the senate, and the forum;" and in the still stronger language of Jerome, "the passion and resurrection of Christ were celebrated in the discourses of all nations." "The fierceness of Thracians and Scythians was softened by the gentle sound of the Gospel, and everywhere Christ was 'all in all.'"

Surely this success was the work of God. His servants planted and watered, but He gave the increase. Surely on every section and line of this first chapter in the history of the missionary enterprise we have the approving seal of Providence—broad and brilliant—and it seems to have been given thus early that the Church, in every subsequent age, might believe and know when engaging in the work of missions, that the God of Providence is most assuredly with her—to open the way for her progress, to defend her from her enemies, and to crown her labors with a blessing.

Let us now pass to what may be termed the latest chapter in the history of the missionary enterprise, and inquire whether it also bears the impress of a Divine signature and benediction—the mark of a superintending and a prospering Providence? In the infancy of our modern missionary societies, some were ready to denounce the very attempt to convert the heathen world to God, as the extreme of fanaticism—a wild speculation—an ignorant crusade, better adapted to the superstitious age that preceded the Reformation, than to times like the present, so eminently distinguished by rational inquiry, enlightened zeal, and religious prudence. Almost within the memory of some now living, scepticism sneered at the idea of evangelizing pagans, as altogether visionary and preposterous: nay, many professors of Christianity even, regarded the promoters of missionary effort as rash and inconsiderate. If they gave them credit for good intentions, they denied their discretion; if they admitted their zeal, they could not for a moment allow them knowledge; and if they indulged a favorable opinion of their piety, they looked upon them rather as

persons to be commiserated for their weakness, than to be followed and aided in their wild and dangerous undertaking. But results as already realized abundantly prove that the modern friends of missions were right, and their opposers wrong. Whether we look to the East or to the West, to the North or to the South, we see the most signal and cheering evidence that this cause recently as in primitive times has been sustained and forwarded of God. On no other supposition can we account for its achievements, so many and so wonderful. We can only refer you to them in a very brief and summary statement. Within less than fifty years the missionary enterprise has driven idolatry from more than twenty islands of the sea. It has so tamed the ferocity of numerous savage tribes, that they have beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. It has broken in pieces some of the most iron-hearted despotisms that have ever scourged and crushed the human family. It has erected hundreds of temples to the living God in the very midst of the habitations of cruelty, and from them is now pouring upon the surrounding darkness and suffering the glorious light of truth and the healing balm of mercy. It has raised whole communities from the most brutal and disgusting degradation to intelligence, sobriety, social order, and domestic happiness. It has exerted its renewing, redeeming power upon unregenerate thousands, inspiring hatred of sin and the love and practice of holiness. It has furnished the afflicted in heathen lands with Divine consolation, the blind with sight, the wretched with songs of gladness, and the dying with triumphant hopes taking hold of immortality. In answer to its call, and under the power of its love, many of the sable sons of Africa have come out from a darkness thicker than that of Egypt, into the marvellous light of the Gospel. In India the devotees of superstition have felt their ranks invaded—and this very moment they are alarmed and trembling for the issue. Already they have seen the charm of caste dissolved, victims rescued from the wheels of Juggernaut, widows from the funeral pile of their husbands, and infants devoted to death snatched from the waves of the Ganges, that they might live to hear the name and lisp the praises of Immanuel. In the islands of the Pacific, what multitudes of people, within the last thirty years, have cast away their idols for the worship of Jehovah! There, indeed, a nation has been born in a day; the wilderness has become a fruitful field; the desert has yielded to cultivation, and the blessing of the Almighty has caused it to bud and blossom as the rose. Look, for example, at the Sandwich Islands—once so benighted and degraded, now so enlightened and elevated. How strikingly now does the social, and moral, and religious aspect of those Islands contrast with what was their appearance a little more than a quarter of a century ago. Then they bore the darkest marks of heathenism, and groaned under its most depressing servitude: now we find there an orderly, an intelligent, an industrious, a refined, and a truly religious people. They have flourishing schools; they have immensely large and influential churches; they have printing presses, and newspapers, and a Christian literature; they have a civil constitution, a representative government, and a code of laws, all based upon Bible principles—in a word, they have all the benefits of an advanced civilization, and all the light, and purity, and blessed hopes of a prevailing and a triumphant Christianity. How has this change been accomplished? Ah! the missionary enterprise has there bestowed its labors, and the God of missions has given it the victory. At his rebuke idols have fallen, darkness has fled, licentiousness has died away, and ancient superstitions have vanished like the mists of the morning. In obedience to his mandate, and by the help of his mercy, a mighty people have there burst their chains, left their degradation, and now stand erect before the world a visible, convincing illustration of the value and the power of Christian missions—and also an evidence clear as demonstration itself,

that such missions now, as of old, have the sanction and aid of Him whose throne is in the heavens. Nor is this a solitary instance of success. Indeed we may say, wherever the missionary in modern time has set his foot, lifted up his voice, and unfurled the banner of the cross, there the God of Providence has been with him, the God of Grace has favored him, and he has obtained trophies of honor to the Redeemer. Under his efforts the slaves of sin have been emancipated; and in answer to his prayers the arm of Omnipotence has been uplifted to demolish the strongholds of Satan, and erect upon their ruins a kingdom which "is righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Nor can we have failed to notice, within the last few years especially, that the spirit of grace has refreshed and enlarged the feeble churches among the heathen far beyond what has been experienced by the churches at home—as though these tender vines in the wilderness, which his servants have planted with difficulty and watered with their tears, were his preference and his delight. According to this time, therefore, it shall be said of the missionary enterprise, "What hath God wrought?" But while we see the seal of Providence, the tokens of Divine approbation, upon the past history of the missionary enterprise; while we may point to its past achievements as an omen of ultimate success, and an argument of sufficient force to silence the cavils of those who oppose it as impracticable and visionary—let it be understood and remembered, this is not our only nor our strongest ground of confidence and hope. Our encouragement for the future is derived mainly, not from what has already been done, but from the teachings, and promises, and predictions, of the Bible. This is the rock upon which we build our highest, firmest hopes; this is the helm which shapes and controls our movements; this is the sheet-anchor by which our mental tossings and misgivings are staid when prospects darken, storms arise, and cherished hopes are blasted. This is the unerring Oracle upon whose prophetical announcements we may safely rely. This is the record of eternal truth, not one jot or tittle of which shall pass away till all be fulfilled.

2. What, then, is the testimony of the Bible respecting the missionary enterprise? Does it insure its steady advancement? Does it point to a large and a glorious result? No question, for an answer to which we have to appeal to these lively oracles, can be more easily or conclusively settled than this. Here we learn that it was the Son of God who first put this great enterprise in motion. Having laid its foundations deep and broad in the Garden of Gethsemane, and upon the cross, where he gave his life a ransom for many, he said to his apostles, and through them to all his followers in succeeding ages—"Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the Gospel to every creature." No language could constitute a more unequivocal expression of his will than this; and to the command he has appended a promise—"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." This promise is most clear, full, and animating. It authorizes us to expect that in all our labors for the conversion of the world the Saviour will give us his special presence and blessing till the design is accomplished. It authorizes us to believe that He is with us *now*, not, indeed, in person, but by the aids and influences of his Holy Spirit. It establishes the position that the cause of missions is his cause, not merely in its origin, but in its continuous progress from year to year. He gives the wisdom necessary to direct its movements; He puts it into the hearts of his people to contribute the funds requisite to meet its pecuniary claims; He raises up and qualifies the agents appointed to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; He watches over their lives on the land and on the sea; He sends them in safety to their various fields of labor; and all their subsequent health, strength, peace, and prosperity are the fruit of his special benediction as the Light and

Saviour of the world. Thanks to his name—with the promise before us, "Lo, I am with you alway," we cannot doubt that when our beloved missionaries bid adieu to home and kindred, and go to the benighted heathen, they are not alone: Jesus, the Risen Redeemer, goes with them. He strengthens their faith, animates their courage, and prepares them for their work. He puts thoughts into their hearts, words into their mouths, and enables them to adapt their instructions to the various classes of perishing men whose salvation they seek to promote. In times of embarrassment and trial his arm sustains them, his presence cheers them, his promise inspires them with hope, and his Holy Spirit breathes into their souls an unutterable and heavenly peace. He comforts them under all their afflictions, and carries them through all their difficulties, and makes the gospel they preach a savor of life unto life. They may plant and water, but He gives the increase. He convinces the heathen of sin, removes their prejudices, dissipates their darkness, and makes them sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Such is the seal of Jesus upon the missionary enterprise; such the relation He sustains to it: and such the mighty work He performs for its sustentation and success. This seal he has pledged Himself to give; this relation He has pledged himself to sustain; this work He has pledged himself to perform, not for a short and precarious duration, but "*always, always*," "even unto the end of the world." With such coöperation, mighty and perpetual, how can we doubt the result?

But besides the assurance, that in laboring for the conversion of the world, we are acting in concert with the Son of God, we have a variety of promises touching the ultimate issue which place our hope of success upon a broad and most reliable foundation. How readest thou? Is it not written in language too obvious to be misunderstood, and by a fidelity we may not call in question: "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters fill the sea. The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High; and all dominions shall serve and obey him. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. Thus saith the Lord God: Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and *all nations* shall flow unto it. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." These promises are exceeding "great and precious." They must and shall be accomplished. Earth and yonder heavens may pass away, but the word of the Lord abideth forever. All that he has engaged to do for Zion can by no means fail of an exact and a timely fulfilment. Do I speak of what He has engaged to do for Zion? Should I not rather say, what He has engaged to do for his only-begotten and well-beloved Son, to whom he has said, "Ask of me, and I shall give the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

If, then, the approving seal of Providence upon the past has any force as an omen of the future; if the great commission of the text, with its accompanying—"Lo I am with you," has any deep and auspicious significancy; if there is truth in the promise of God to his Church and to his Son; if the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son is ordered in all things and sure, so that all that the Father hath given Him shall come to Him: then the missionary enterprise rests upon a large and solid basis; it can never be a failure; it must ultimately be crowned with complete and glorious success. Though the field of its operation is the world, very dark and very desolate; and though the difficulties it has to overcome are numerous and formidable; and though its progress for a season may seem to be laborious and slow;—yet it must ultimately prevail and triumph. On this point there is no room left for apprehension.

The great and only question then is, and it is a question which all the people of God are bound to ponder with prayerful and tender anxiety, what *can* we, what *ought* we personally to do, in obedience to the command of our risen Lord, to urge this enterprise forward to its benign and blessed issue? Its triumph is to be achieved through human instrumentality—through the agency of the Church, ministers, and people. This throws a fearful weight of responsibility upon every one who has named the name of Christ, and who professes to sympathize with Him in his plan of redeeming mercy. I repeat it, therefore, the question which every Christian is required to decide touching the conversion of the world, is simply a question of *personal* duty—"Lord, what wilt thou have *me* to do?" Having heard of the extent of the missionary enterprise, its origin, its objects, its history and its sure prospect of success, do you acknowledge its claims upon you? Do you feel the prompting of a warmer affection towards it, and do you ask what you are to do to extend its influence and hasten its latter day of glory? I will venture to make a few suggestions, designed to aid you in the solution of this inquiry.

1. You are to seek for *information* respecting the condition of those whom this enterprise aims to reach and to save. If you know little or nothing of their extreme degradation, their odious customs, their present and their prospective woes, your sympathies on their behalf will not be awakened; you will be moved by no earnest concern for their salvation. The sources of information are of easy access. Missionary papers are so numerous and cheap, that no one need remain in ignorance. Fifty cents a year and the reading of a few pages every month will furnish you with details enough of heathen wretchedness to melt a heart of stone. Knowledge will awaken feeling, and deep, earnest feeling will lead to effort. And need I urge upon Christian men the obligation of feeling for the heathen? Is it not enough to say, *their souls are perishing?* You feel for your own family in distress; you feel for malefactors on the verge of execution; you feel for passengers on the deck of a burning steamer as they fall before the devouring element, and sink to a watery grave; you feel for the city where a pestilence is raging; and can you be unmoved at the sight of six hundred millions of immortal men, dead in trespasses and sins, under the wrath of God, and sinking to an eternal hell without Christ and without hope? O, my hearers, you are called upon by all that is precious in the eternal life of unaccounted myriads of souls, and by all that is dreadful in the prospect of their being lost for ever, to be moved with the tenderest compassion for a world lying in wickedness. You must look at their condition, ponder their prospects, and feel for them "with the bowels of Jesus Christ." Feel as Paul did when he said, "I say the truth in Christ; I lie not; my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness

and continual sorrow of heart for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh." Such feeling must and will prompt to effort. It will not permit you to rest in guilty indolence. It will urge and impel you to learn and to do your duty.

2. You are bound to pray for the missionary enterprise earnestly and often. However humble your station in life may be, or limited your influence among men, you can help this cause by your prayers. If you are a Christian, you have access to the mercy-seat, and power with the God of Missions as a supplicant. You can pray for the Church that she may be baptized with the spirit of her risen Lord, and disposed to enter with augmented zeal upon the work He has committed to her hands. You can pray for an increase of laborers to enter the field, already white, and gather the perishing harvest. You can pray for the missionary that his life may be spared, his heart encouraged, and his efforts crowned with a blessing. You can pray for the benighted nations that the Sun of righteousness may arise upon them with healing in his wings. You can pray for yourself that God will put it into your heart to do all in your power for the extension of his kingdom. For all these objects you can pray daily in secret places and at the family altar; and when the time for the monthly concert arrives, you can meet your brethren at the mercy-seat, and mingle your tears and your supplications for a perishing world with *theirs*. Ye who have an interest at the throne of grace, as you love the Redeemer and the souls of men, you are bound to plead the promises and pray without ceasing for the spread and triumph of the Gospel. Though you can do but little otherwise for this cause you can do wonders for it by the power of prayer. Even the meanest child of poverty, if he is a child of the Highest, can cast much wealth into the missionary treasury, and send many laborers into the missionary field by the simple offering up of that Christ-dictated petition, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." What praying soul, then, in this assembly is not ready to say with augmented strength of purpose, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth, and the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory."

3. I remark, in the third place, that however much information you may procure respecting the condition of the heathen, however deeply you may feel for them, or however earnestly you may pray for their conversion, your whole duty will not be discharged till to send them the Gospel you contribute of your property *liberally*, and even *to a sacrifice*. To sustain and carry forward the missionary enterprise funds are indispensable. Young men must be trained for the missionary service, and in many instances the expense of their education must be defrayed by the Church. When prepared they must be *sent* to their fields of labor; and when there they must be fed and clothed. Those already in the service must be supported; churches must be built, schools established, and printing-presses kept in operation from year to year. All this requires funds; and unless those funds are contributed by the people of God, the work must stop. Such is the responsibility upon the Church, and in that responsibility every individual member has a share. If you, my hearers, would do your *whole duty* you must soberly calculate how much you can contribute every week, every month, or every year, to send the Gospel to the destitute, and then act accordingly. Let this calculation be regulated not simply by a willingness to give, but by a readiness to practice *self-denial*, a determination to *sacrifice*—yes, to make large and cheerful sacrifices for the cause of Him, who, though He was rich, yet for your sakes became

poor. The question is not, What can you do *conveniently* to save 600,000,000 of your fellow-men from the woes of the second death. What! is *convenience* a standard by which Christians are to measure their efforts to obey the last command of Jesus and save a ruined world? What would you think of a father who should coolly say, he would do all he could *conveniently* to safe the life of a child dying with fever? Or who, after his death, should content himself with the declaration that he had done all he could *conveniently* to save him from the grave? Is the salvation of the soul a less momentous object? Surely the question is not, what is it *convenient* for you to do—but what is it *possible* for you to do? All that it is possible for you to do in consistency with other duties your Redeemer requires of you. It may be *convenient* for you to make efforts enough to save ten benighted Pagans from death. It may be possible for you, without neglecting other duties, to save a hundred. *God requires the hundred.* Is this raising the standard of liberality too high? Will you bend over an open Bible, and lay your finger upon the words of our text, and say so? This standard may be too high for our present narrow views and our feeble piety; but does it go beyond the spirit of the great commission and the wants of a dying world? Is it higher than the demands of Christ and of duty? Should we esteem it too high if we were properly imbued with the missionary spirit? Is it too high in the estimation of those who live nearest to the Saviour, and have most of the mind that was in Him? Make our most devoted and self-denying missionaries themselves the judges, and will they say that this standard is too high? For example, let us refer the question to that devoted wife and mother whose case was published a few years ago in the Missionary Herald. In early life she had accompanied her husband to a heathen land as a missionary. Years passed away as she pursued her work of love, till her children were growing up around her. They were exposed to the contaminating influence of heathenism. They could not be educated aright in that dark and idolatrous land; nor did she feel that she could leave that land to superintend their education in a Christian country. She, therefore, concluded to *part* with her children, to send them to her own native land to be educated under the care of relatives, while she should remain at her post. The hour of parting came. She led them to the ship in which they were to sail; gave them a parting kiss with a mother's affection and a mother's agony; walked quickly away from the vessel to the shore, paused a moment, then lifted her hands and her streaming eyes to heaven and said: "O Jesus! this I do for thee." Ask that mother whether the standard of liberality for which I am pleading is too high for her? Would it be too high for *us* if we had her spirit? O this ardent, constraining love to Christ as a Saviour —this self-denying loyalty to him as a King—is the very essence of the missionary spirit. This is the spirit which, under God, is to convert the world. And when all our churches are thoroughly imbued with this spirit, then our missionary boards will no longer be embarrassed as they now are for the want of funds. Their treasuries will be full to overflowing. The rich and the poor together will give of their substance largely, liberally, even to the point of self-denial and sacrifice for the spread of the gospel—esteeming it blessedness enough in return to be able to look heavenward to a smiling Redeemer, and say—"O Jesus, this we do for thee!"

4. Again: It is the duty of some, nay, of many, to *go in person* to the heathen as the dispensers of light, mercy, and salvation. Perhaps some of us, brethren, should have gone, who are now ministering in these pleasant places. Perhaps it may still be the duty of some of us to resign our present charges and go. But if we go not ourselves, whom shall

we *send*, and who will go *for us?* And as we ask this question, with what interest do we turn to the pious *young men* of our churches. There may be some such young men before me now. A word to them. In the name of Jesus, I ask you to take his great commission in your hands, and prayerfully, candidly, seriously, and as for the judgment, ponder the question, whether it is not your duty to go as his ambassadors to the heathen. Look well to this inquiry. Open your eyes to light and evidence, and let every selfish preference be subordinated to the claims of Jesus and of souls. I know your danger of mistake, because I know the ties which bind you here. Here are your friends and relatives. Here is your country and your home—and you love it. Here cluster all the thrilling memories which bind you to the past. Here you have heard the sweet sound of the gospel, and found peace in believing in Jesus. Of course all your earthly attachments are here. Here you would naturally wish to live and labor, and here you would die and be buried. But on the other hand, here is the great commission—"Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every* creature," and with it is blended the thrilling cry from thousands and hundreds of thousands of the heathen: "Come over and help us." Oh, it may be the will of Christ that *you* should respond to this cry, and go far hence to the Gentiles. If so, be willing to see it. And when duty is once made clear, let there be no hesitation—no conferring with flesh and blood, but let your prompt and cheerful response be—

"And I will go: I may not longer doubt
To give up *friends* and *home*, and idle hopes,
And every tender tie that binds my heart
To thee, my country!———
I only pray, God fit me for the work:
God make me holy, and my spirit nerve
For the stern hour of strife.———
And when I come to stretch me for the last,
In unattended agony, beneath
The cocoa's shade, or lift my dying eyes
From Afric's burning sand, it will be sweet
That I have toiled for other worlds than this.
I know I shall feel happier than to die
On softer bed."

So many of our beloved young men, now in distant lands, have thought, and felt, and spoken. We bless God for their example. It shows the true spirit of Christianity; and we trust there are many others now in our midst who will be fired with a similar zeal, and go forth on a similar errand of duty and of love.

Finally.—Let me say, it is exceedingly desirable that all our churches should have *living representatives from their own numbers* acting as missionaries on heathen ground. There is a sad deficiency here in most of our churches, large and small. They may be very worthy of commendation in many respects, but they are wanting in missionary zeal—and the reason may be that no one of their own sons and daughters has ever gone to the heathen. Oh, how it identifies families and churches with the missionary enterprise, to have their own baptized and consecrated children come forward and give themselves to the work. They feel then as they never felt before, that this cause is *their* cause; they pray for it with augmented fervency, and take a livelier interest in everything relating to its history and progress. In such churches the monthly concert is not forgotten, nor are missionary contributions made with a cold and grudging reluctance. Would to God that all our churches were connected with this cause by such a tender, and intimate, and *living* bond as this. Let us pray and labor that they may be.

My dear brethren in the ministry and eldership: Let us see to it that the missionary enterprise has a vigorous hold upon our affections and our hopes. We are among the leaders in that army which, under Messiah, the Prince, is marching on to the moral conquest of the world. A great and fearful responsibility is upon us. The missionary zeal of our respective charges will sink or rise with *ours*. If our congregations feel but little, pray but little, and contribute but little for the cause of missions; and if few or none of our sons and our daughters devote *themselves* to its advancement, doubtless the fault of all this is, in a great measure, with us. Such is our responsibility; and in view of it, let us begin to study the great commission anew; let us make it our meditation day and night; let us pray over it till we feel its binding obligations more sensibly, and imbibe its very spirit. Let us inculcate that obligation and that very spirit upon our people, and urge and *lead* them up to the help of the Lord, even to the help of the Lord against the mighty; and when, in the heat of the conflict, they send up to us the earnest, anxious inquiry, "Watchman, what of the night?"—let us point them to the promises, and send back the prompt and animating answer, "The morning cometh,"—the morning of a bright and glorious millennium.